

THE DOCTRINE OF THE UNIVERSAL AGENCY OF GOD, THE PROPER

SOURCE OF CONSOLATION UNDER AFFLICTION :

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A SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE FUNERAL OF

MRS. MILLECENT E. PEIRCE,

THE WIFE OF

REV. JOHN D. PEIRCE,

At Sangerfield, N. Y. Feb. 1, 1827;

BY REV. WILLIAM R. WEEKS.

WITH

AN ADDRESS,

BY REVEREND RALPH ROBINSON.

TO WHICH IS ADDED, A

Biographical Sketch of the Deceased.



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SERMON.

JOB 5. 18. *He maketh sore, and bindeth up : He woundeth, and his hands make whole.*

No doctrine is so abundantly taught in the scriptures as the doctrine of the universal agency of God. No doctrine is so rich in practical consequences, so well adapted to exalt God, and bring creatures to their proper place at his feet. To the intelligent christian, who understands it, no doctrine is so full of consolation, so well adapted to yield support in the hour of affliction, to furnish encouragement under every trial, and to quicken his zeal and animate his courage in the discharge of every duty. And though others may not understand it, nor feel it to be so, the scripture saints appear to have understood it well. It was their grand resort in the time of trouble. When Job was stripped of his possessions and of his children in one day, and from the height of earthly enjoyment was plunged into the deepest distress, though he knew that creatures had been the instruments, he saw the hand of God in it all, and said, "Naked came I out of my mothers womb, and naked shall I return thither : the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away : blessed be the name of the Lord." And it is added, "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." When Eli, whose heart was wrung with anguish by the wicked conduct of his sons, heard the heavy tidings that God was about to cut them off in his wrath, he said, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." When David was driven from his throne, and from what he valued more, the sanctuary and worship of God, and was fleeing for his life from the face of his natural son, and an obscure Benjamite insulted his misery by casting stones and heaping execrations upon him, he said, "Let him alone, and let him curse ; for the Lord hath bidden him." When, on another occasion, he was overwhelmed with affliction, and saw his life drawing near to the grave ; when the wicked opened their mouth with reproaches, and God with rebukes was correcting

him for his iniquity, and making his beauty to consume away like a moth, his language was to the same effect : “ I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it.” In the context, Eliphaz said, “ Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground ; yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward. I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause ; which doth great things and unsearchable ; marvellous things without number : who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields : to set up on high those that be low ; that those who mourn may be exalted to safety. He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprize. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness ; and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong. Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth ; therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty : for he maketh sore, and bindeth up : he woundeth, and his hands maketh whole.”

Let us, on this occasion, so deeply afflicting to us all, follow the example of the scripture saints, and dwell a few moments on this interesting and consoling subject : “ *He maketh sore, and bindeth up : He woundeth and his hands make whole.*”

It is proposed,

I. To give a brief scriptural view of the doctrine of the universal agency of God ; and

II. To show why this is the proper source of consolation under affliction.

I am, *first*, To give a brief scriptural view of the doctrine. Neither the time nor the occasion will admit of more ; justice to the subject will not admit of less.

The scriptures plainly affirm that it is God “ who *worketh all things* after the counsel of his own will.” (Eph. 1. 11.) They use the same language to express his agency in both the natural and moral world. He says, (Is. 45,) “ I am the Lord, and there is none else ; there is no God besides me. I form the light, and create darkness ; I make peace, and create evil. I the Lord do all these things.” Again, he says, (Deut. 32. 39,) “ See now that I, even I am he, and there is no God with me : I kill, and I make alive ; I wound, and I heal ; neither is there any can deliver out of my hand.” It must not be thought that the agency of creatures, or the use of means, is excluded by the universal agency of God. He

uses creatures, both bad and good, as the instruments by which he accomplishes his purposes ; and if they are intelligent creatures, they act, as really as he does, in the accomplishment of the event. And in bringing about the same event, they often act with one design, while he acts with a very different design. When he raised up the king of Assyria, and sent him against Judah, his design was to execute righteous Judgment upon his offending people ; but, of the king of Assyria, he said, (Is. 10. 7,) “Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so ; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few. Wherefore it shall come to pass, that, when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.” But, lest it should be thought that the agency of this haughty king was independent of God, and excluded the divine hand from acting in this matter, it is added, “Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith ? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it ? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood”—than which no language seems better adapted to teach, that though the Assyrian was a free and accountable agent in all this, and was to be punished for his bad designs in it, yet God held him in his hand, and directed all his movements, for the accomplishment of his own purposes, as really as the man does who moves an axe, or a saw, or any other instrument, in the performance of his work. To the same purpose, David, in the 17th Psalm, acknowledges the agency of God in his afflictions, and speaks of the wicked, who were his instruments, as the sword, and the hand, by which God chastized him. Yet the scriptures never confound what God does with what the creature does ; nor ascribe praise or blame to any being, for any thing more than his own actions. In the 150th Psalm, the distinction is very clearly made, in speaking of the Egyptians. “He *turned their heart* to hate his people, to deal subtilely with his servants.” God turned their hearts : this was what *he* did. They *hated* his people ; this was what *they* did. God is worthy of praise for his action, which was such as became him to perform, and was performed with a good design ; while those instruments of his were worthy of blame for their action, which was in its own nature a moral evil. So that, while God uses his crea-

tures as the instruments of his operations, and as really holds them in his hand, and moves them at his pleasure, as a man does his axe, or his saw, or any other instrument of his work ; while their hearts are in his hand, and he turns them whithersoever he will, (Pr. 21. 1;) they act also, as really as he does, and are held responsible by him for their actions, and are approved and rewarded, or disapproved and punished, according to the nature of their actions, and as they have been a fulfilment or a violation of the moral law.

To apply these remarks to the subject of afflictions : Eliphaz, in the text and context, ascribes afflictions in general, and those of Job in particular, to the hand of God. They did not come out of the ground ; they did not spring up by chance ; they were not the result of a blind, unintelligent fate. They were not merely the work of wicked men, or of Satan, though these had been instruments in bringing them upon him. It was God that had brought them upon him : “for *He* maketh sore, and bindeth up : *He* woundeth, and *his hands* make whole.” To the same effect was the acknowledgment of Job, when his afflictions came. It was announced to him that the Sabeans had seized upon his cattle, that the lightning had consumed his sheep, that the Chaldeans had carried off his camels, and that a great wind had blown down the house upon his children. This good man looked beyond these instruments to the hand that moved them, and expressed himself accordingly : “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord.” Many are the afflictions of the righteous ; and the most severe often come through the instrumentality of creatures. Yet it is true, in all cases, that they come from God. And it is the great source of consolation to good men under affliction, that they are authorized to look beyond the instrument to the hand that moves it, and to say, in the language of the text, “*He, He* maketh sore, and bindeth up : *He* woundeth, and *his hands* make whole.”

This brings us to the *second* thing proposed, which was to show why this is the proper source of consolation under affliction. And I would observe,

1. That other sources of consolation are insufficient. A stic might say to the afflicted, It is vain to grieve—what is done cannot be undone—such disappointments are the inevitable lot of humanity—nothing has happened but what might have been expected—we must yield to our fate, and bear it as well as we can—to in-

Indulge in grief, will only unfit us to enjoy those comforts which remain—let us wipe away our tears, and look abroad in the world, and see what there is yet for us to enjoy. These things may be said; and to those who have no God, no Bible, and no religion but the religion of nature, they may be the best sources of consolation that they know. But how cold is the comfort they bring to the heart that is bursting with grief; how utterly insufficient to furnish support, on occasions like this?

Equally insufficient are the topics of consolation which are often presented by professed Christians. They often say to the bereaved; You have reason to suppose that your deceased friend is gone to heaven—he exhibited in his life comfortable evidence of being reconciled to God and prepared to enjoy him for ever—your loss, though great, is doubtless his greater gain—and this affliction, though severe, is but preparing you to follow, and will doubtless issue in your unspeakable good—it is through much tribulation that we must enter into the kingdom of God—the rest of heaven will be sweeter, after a season of toil and suffering—and how great will be the reward of those who have been called to unusual afflictions in this life! These things may be true, and may be important in their place; but, *is this all?* It seems, indeed, to be all that many think of. Their own good, and that of their particular friends, seems to be the subject that chiefly occupies their minds. To *them* it may seem the proper topic of consolation, because it is the most consoling to their own feelings. But, there *are* those, to whom their own personal good is not the great subject of concern. There are those, who, in the deepest personal affliction, extend their thoughts beyond themselves, and look at the glory of God, and the good of his kingdom. There are those, to whom it is a very small thing to be assured that their own personal good is secure, which, compared with the great object of their desires, is no more than the small dust of the balance, or a drop of water to the ocean. To such as these, such topics of consolation are altogether insufficient. And besides, there are circumstances to which they will not apply. We often lose friends, concerning whom we have no good reason to hope that they are gone to heaven. Do the scriptures furnish no ground of consolation for such cases? And individuals are often called to suffer affliction who have no reason to think they sustain the character of those to whom all

things work together for good. Is there no topic of consolation which is suitable to be presented to the consideration of such persons? And if we *are* children of God, how do we know, without taking into view his universal agency, that all things shall work for our good? It is manifest, then, that other topics of consolation are entirely insufficient, and that the scripture saints acted a reasonable part, when, at such times, they turned their thoughts to God, and endeavoured to see and feel, that “*He* maketh sore, and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole.”

2. This doctrine is the proper source of consolation under affliction, because it leads us to the conclusion, that the event which has taken place, however afflicting it may be in itself, is on the whole wisest and best. Many events take place, which, in themselves considered, are very dark and mysterious, many which are exceedingly painful and trying. And if the hand of God is to be excluded from them, if he has no design to answer by them, if they take place solely by the agency of creatures, or by blind fate or chance, what source of consolation can there be, to a good man, under such events? How dark and distressing must be the bare contemplation of them, and how insupportable the actual endurance! But, admit the agency of God in them, let it appear that the Lord has done it, and the light breaks forth, the darkness clears away, consolations full and rich pour in upon the soul, and the suffering Christian, from the depths of his affliction, raises the song of triumph, and rejoices greatly in the Lord. Do you ask, why? It is because he knows, that the God whom he loves, and whose glory he rejoices in, is infinitely wise, to know what is best, infinitely good, to choose what is best, and infinitely powerful, to execute all his wise and benevolent purposes. He knows, that the afflictions he suffers would not have been brought upon him, had not infinite wisdom and goodness required it. He knows, that if he were as wise and as good as God is, if he had seen all the good which is to be secured by this painful event, and had placed the same value upon it that God does, he would have chosen that this event should take place, and would not for a moment have been willing it should be otherwise. He knows, that the event is not only one which infinite wisdom and goodness required, as necessary for the greatest good, but that it comes from the kind hand and compassionate heart of a God of infinite mercy, who does not afflict willingly, nor take

any pleasure in the sufferings of the meanest creature that he has made. He knows, that all the evil that is inflicted, has its full weight in the divine mind, and that the greater it is in itself, the greater is the good which it is intended to secure, and the more God is entitled to the praise and thanksgiving of all good beings for taking the best measures to secure it. He is well assured, that every event which takes place here, is designed by infinite wisdom to lay a foundation for the everlasting exercise and display of the glorious perfections of God. And when he considers that those perfections are infinite, and that the ever growing capacity of created intelligences, through a boundless eternity, will have its most full and happy employment in the contemplation of them, and that the minutest event which God brings to pass in this world, is connected with this ever increasing amount of good, he will feel that it is a privilege to live, and a privilege to suffer, even to the greatest degree of which he is capable, if God sees best, if it will but advance so glorious an object.

Will it be said, that all this consolation may be enjoyed by the good man, though he should not think of the universal agency of God; and even though he should not believe that God has any direct agency in any of the events which now take place? Will it be said, that all this consolation will be equally open to him, if he considers, that God made the world at first, and brought such creatures into existence as he has, with such a *nature* as he knew would lead to the same course of events, and to the same ultimate results, even though no agency of God should be employed in any of them? To this question, I answer, I think not, for several reasons. The sick and languishing child loves to see his parent's face, and to feel his parent's hand, supporting his feeble frame, and ministering to his wants. And his comfort is sensibly diminished, when that hand is withdrawn and that face is hid, even though no other difference is visible. So the child of God, in the time of his calamity, wants to have God *near*, and to see and feel his hand. The thought of having God afar off is painful and distressing to him, even though every thing else should be the same. And the more lively sense he can have of a *present God*, the more he can feel his hand in every blessing he receives, and in every pain he suffers, the greater comfort it is to him. To remove the presence and agency of God so far back as the creation of the world, would seem to him almost like

removing it from the universe altogether. Besides, when sore afflictions press us down, and all the powers of body and mind are ready to give way, we are not in a situation to pursue, with much advantage, a long course of abstract reasoning. If we cannot find God, but by tracing the chain of events, from step to step, back to the creation, we shall not be likely to find him at all. If the source of consolation and support is not so near that we can feel it, and rest upon it, we shall sink. The scripture saints felt it so, in the day of their distress, and turned their thoughts directly to God. In whatever way their afflictions came, by whatever instruments they were brought upon them, they turned their thoughts at once to the divine hand, which they saw and felt, and rested their souls on God, as the only adequate support.

3. That the doctrine of the universal agency of God is the proper source of consolation under affliction, is further seen from its connexion with the duties of prayer and submission. Prayer is always a duty and a privilege ; but at no time is it more so than in the time of affliction. Submission can have no place, except in the presence or in the prospect of evil of some kind. And as these things are duties of indispensable importance in the time of affliction, so they are the means by which the afflicted soul who resorts to them finds much peace and comfort. But prayer and submission both have a direct reference to the agency of God. All that part of prayer which consists in thanksgiving, is an acknowledgment of the divine hand in the things for which God is thanked ; and all that part which consists in petition, is requesting him to exert his agency in doing those things that seem to us desirable he should do. As it would be absurd to thank him for doing things which we do not believe he has done, so it would be equally absurd to ask him to do things which we do not believe he ever does or can do. Submission also has a direct reference to the agency of God. In the prospect of evils to come, its language is, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." Under bereavements, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord." Under present sufferings, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" If there were any evils, in which God had no agency, it would be absurd to call an acquiescence in them submission to God. It might be submission to that being who brought them upon us ; but it could not be submission to God, if

God had no hand in them. If, then, in submission to God, and in prayer to him, the afflicted believer finds his greatest peace and comfort, and if the agency of God is the direct object of both, the agency of God is the proper theme of contemplation, in the time of affliction, and the source whence the sweetest comforts are derived.

A few *Remarks* will close the subject.

1. If the doctrine of the universal agency of God is the proper source of consolation under affliction, then, how desirable it is, that all should be made acquainted with it, and be prepared to avail themselves of it. All are exposed to afflictions, in this world. "Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward." No rank, or age, or sex, or condition of mankind, can plead an exemption. But all are not acquainted with the proper source of consolation, or are not willing to avail themselves of it. Some have found it, and have resorted to it, in time of need, and have felt themselves greatly strengthened and supported by it. And shall they keep it to themselves? Shall they look around, and see their fellow creatures sinking in sorrow, and forbear to tell them how rich, and full, and overflowing with living waters, are these wells of consolation? No; they will try, if they have one spark of sympathy with the distressed, if they have one benevolent emotion in their breasts, they will try to lead others to the same living and exhaustless fountain. They will try to open their eyes, to remove their prejudices, and persuade them to drink and live.

2. If this doctrine is the proper source of consolation under affliction, then, how careful should we be not to do any thing to prevent others from enjoying the benefit of it, even though we choose to neglect it ourselves. If some have other sources of consolation with which they are satisfied, and do not choose to enjoy the benefit of this, there are others, who have learned, by their own happy experience, how much superior this is, and how insufficient all others are to yield that support which they need. They have learned to stay their souls on God, and to rejoice that the Lord reigns. When the waves of affliction rise, and the storms of trouble beat upon them, they fly to this refuge, and stay themselves upon this rock. Shall we seek to deprive them of it? Would any one who had seen a fellow creature struggling with the stormy billows, and ready to sink in the abyss that was gaping to devour him, put forth his hand to push him from the rock which he had just

reached, and expose him again to the enraged elements? Does not every feeling of humanity forbid so unkind an action? Does not every kindly feeling of the heart revolt at the thought of doing any thing that would tend to deprive others of a source of consolation so precious to them, even though it should appear of no importance to us?

3. In view of this subject, I feel it to be matter of thankfulness that my afflicted Brother is no stranger to this topic of consolation; that he has made it the theme of much private meditation and public labour; that he has been accustomed to point others to it, as a subject, not of cold speculation, but of deep practical importance, and rich in practical uses; and that he knows how, as I trust he does, to apply it to his own case, and to stay himself upon it, in this hour of his distress. And it is matter of thankful remembrance that his deceased Companion was no stranger to this subject, but was well acquainted with this great truth and its kindred truths, and knew how to derive from them that support and consolation which they are so well adapted to afford amidst the evils of life or the terrors of death; and that, as the closing scene approached, which, though sudden, was not unthought of by her, she dwelt much in her meditations, and in her conversation, upon the all wise, all perfect, and all powerful government of God, as directing all events in the best manner for the accomplishment of that great end for which he made all things, the most perfect exercise and display of all his adorable perfections. In the last conversation in which she was able to take a part, these subjects were her theme. She expressed herself to this effect; that she expected soon to be where she should see God as he is, and where none would wish to have his true character obscured or kept out of sight; but where all would be willing to have it known as it is. And she thought, that, let her destiny be what it might, she could rejoice to see that God had done right; and that if she should be cast off, it would be an alleviation to her mind, to see that God had done every thing in wisdom and goodness. And she said, with a good deal of feeling, that heaven appeared to her more and more desirable, for there *truth would shine*. That character of God which these truths exhibit was the character she appeared to love with all her heart; these truths she lived upon; and these truths, we trust, now form the theme of her delightful contemplation, not in the faint manner in which they are seen here,

but in the full blaze of light which surrounds the throne of God. May we all so feel, and so live, that it shall be matter of rejoicing to us, while here, that *the Lord reigns*; and be prepared, at length, to unite with the happy spirits above, in ascribing, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." *Amen.*

AN ADDRESS,

BY REVEREND RALPH ROBINSON.

By particular request, I am to make a few remarks by way of address, on the present occasion. And I hope they may not be such as will turn off your attention from the solemn truths to which you have just been listening; truths so appropriate to this afflicting scene, to which we are this day called.

You, my dear Brother, are entitled to a share in these remarks. The present is to you a season of peculiar affliction. Notwithstanding your knowledge of the shortness and uncertainty of human life, you have, doubtless, anticipated enjoying the society of your dear Companion for years to come. You have, I doubt not, hoped that she would be continued in life, to be the instrument of encouraging and comforting you in the arduous work in which you are engaged. And you have been cheered with the expectation that she would be the means of supporting you, when called to meet opposition for Christ's and the truth's sake. But all these hopes are blasted by a stroke.

It is a mysterious Providence that has taken her away at this period of life, before she had completed her twenty-fourth year. It is an event which is inscrutable to us.

But if you are sorely afflicted, you have been highly favoured. Your Companion possessed a clear, discriminating mind. For one of her years, she had an uncommonly clear and extensive view of divine truth. She manifested an inflexible adherence to the great fundamental truths of the Bible. She exhibited a firm attachment to the scriptural character of God, and to the method of salvation which God has devised, and revealed in his holy word. Her last conversation with you, which has just been rehearsed, was an animated strain on some of these topics; a fact which is peculiarly adapted to support and console you in this period of sore affliction.

These, and other similar facts, call upon you for the exercise of lively gratitude to God.

There are sufficient reasons, in the providence of God, for your sudden and unexpected bereavement. It would be vain to attempt to assign *all* the reasons, which probably exist in the Divine mind, for thus sorely afflicting you. There may be many reasons which are wholly hid from us. But some of them I think are obvious. One of them is, that you may know better how to condole with others in their distresses. In the performance of your ministerial duties you are frequently called to visit the distressed and afflicted. And now you will be better prepared to enter into their feelings of anguish, and to sympathize with them, than you otherwise could have been.

Another reason is, that you may be more weaned from the world. If you have truly given up your heart to God, and laid up your treasure in heaven, as we hope you have, still you are an imperfect creature, and liable to criminal worldly attachments. But perhaps no event is better adapted to show you the vanity and emptiness of all creature objects, and to wean you effectually from the world, than the present sore affliction.

Another reason is, that God may try your heart; and let it be made manifest whether the truth you preach will support and comfort you, while passing through the furnace. You are in the habit of presenting divine truth to others, truth which exhibits the character and the government of God, as the unfailing source of support and consolation in their afflictions. And what is now, my dear sir, the language of your *heart*? Can you say, cordially, "The *Lord* gave, and the *Lord* hath taken away; *blessed* be the *name* of the *Lord*?"

The afflicted and bereaved Sister present should not be left unnoticed in these remarks. But a few months since, you have been called to part with both your parents. And now, your only sister has fled from your sight. These are heavy strokes, repeated in quick succession. But you have reason to hope your sister has gone to a better world; for which divine grace had prepared her. And what is more important for your consideration, is, the Lord has done it; and he has done it in the wisest and best manner. Are you prepared to follow your departed sister into the world of spirits? Had you been called to take her place, what would have been your condition and prospects? Have you given up yourself *wholly* to God? Are you prepared to enter upon that rest which remaineth to the people of God? Do you hear the voice of God which thus solemnly and repeatedly addresses you? These calls will meet you again at the judgment seat of Christ. And what improvement will you now make, while you are a candidate for eternity? Will you "remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when you shall say, I have no pleasure in them?"

The church in this place, of which the deceased was a member, is particularly and solemnly addressed by the present painful event of Providence. I think I may say with propriety and truth, you, as well as your minister, have sustained a great and afflicting loss. You have not only enjoyed the society of your departed sister in Christ in the social circle, and her presence in the house of God; but you have found her ready, I have reason to believe, as she had opportunity, and where it was proper for her to do it, to present before you the great subject of religion. In doing this, she did not content herself with exhibiting, so to speak, the mere shell of religion, as many professing christians do; topics of mere selfishness, in which the totally selfish may unite with cordiality and pleasure. She made it her aim to exhibit in her religious conversation what constitutes the essence of true godliness. She was disposed to illustrate and urge the necessity of reconciliation to the true character of God. And she evidently felt the necessity of discriminating clearly between true religion and false, between true experience and false; lest souls bound to eternity should be fatally deceived.

You have found her not afraid nor ashamed to profess her unshaken attachment to the great fundamental truths of the word of God. She appeared to feel that bible wisdom has its pillars, its essential, its fundamental truths; upon which the whole edifice of true religion must rest; and that if these are taken away the whole fabric must fall. Consequently, you have found her ready, in her proper sphere, to attempt to vindicate those important truths which exhibit God, and his government, and his great and benevolent designs, in the clearest manner. This she was ready to do, although she knew these fundamental truths are so much hated and opposed and vilified in this world; and not merely reproached and rejected by the avowed enemies of religion, but by many of the professed friends of God, and by some of the professed ministers of Christ.

And now, who among you in this church, will rise up, and "stand in the gap, and make up the hedge?" Who among you will appear openly and decidedly to adhere to and vindicate the fundamental doctrines and duties taught in the word of God? Who among you will stand up as decided advocates for the essential traits of true religion and christian character? Who, without fear, will appear on the side of truth, in the face of a complaining, reviling and frowning world?

Are there any in this house of God who consider themselves mere spectators to the solemnities of this day? Are you indeed only spectators to the interesting truths you have just now heard, and to the afflicting event of Providence which has called us together? And *can* you be mere spectators in the hour of death, at the day of judgment, and through the retributions of eternity? Are there not realities before you, that should call into action every faculty of your souls, and that should engage all the affections of your hearts? Let us, then, prepare to meet our God.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

MRS. MILLECENT E. PEIRCE, the subject of the following narrative, was born of respectable and pious parents, March 25, 1803. Holden, (Mass.) was the place of her nativity. Her father's name was James Estabrook, Esq.; the name of her mother, before her marriage, was Betsey Lovell. Millecent was their eldest surviving daughter. In early life, she was furnished with all the necessary means for the acquisition of useful knowledge; and, it may be truly said, that she improved her time to the best advantage. She was ever obedient to her parents; and seldom, if ever, did any thing without first consulting their wishes. She was kind and affectionate in her intercourse with her brothers and sister, as well as with all those with whom she was called to associate. She was naturally open and generous in her disposition, and was a person of the finest sensibility. She has often remarked, that when quite young, it used to give her much pain to go into a house, and discover any thing like variance in the domestic circle. Though very lively in her constitutional feelings, which she sometimes indulged to such an extent, as to give her the appearance of thoughtlessness and unconcern about a future state; yet she was not without many serious reflections, even in the days of childhood and youth. In the morning of life, she was instructed in the great things of religion; and was a child of many prayers. When quite young, she discovered a fondness for investigation; and was ever inquisitive to know the reason of things. The faculties of her mind, which began to develop themselves in early life, were of the first order.

In the beginning of the winter of 1817, a very general revival took place in her native town. Her attention was early arrested; and for several months she was under deep concern. She was brought to see herself to be a lost and ruined creature; and to realize the total alienation of her heart from God. She knew that her heart was enmity against him. His electing goodness, and amiable sovereignty, as displayed in having mercy on whom he will have mercy, excited the enmity of her heart to the highest degree of opposition. She has often said, that this opposition of her heart was generally so much excited, when she heard of the conversion of any one with whom she was acquainted, as to make her miserable. At such times, she would inquire—What has this individual done more than I? Surely I have done as much, if not

more, than this person to get religion? Why is this one taken, and I left?—As she was fully persuaded of the truth of the doctrine of election, so she thought that if she was elected to eternal life, she should be saved, if not, she should be lost, let her do what she would. She, therefore, came to the conclusion, that she had nothing to do; and that she would try to do nothing more, as she was sure she had done every thing she could to get religion. Several times she resolved to banish from her mind all thoughts of God, and to give herself no more uneasiness about her future state, as it was fixed, and nothing she could ever do would alter it. Once or twice, she so far succeeded as to live in quiet through the day; but when she came to retire, a sense of the divine presence would completely destroy her repose. While she was grovelling in this manner, with the sovereignty of God, she awoke out of sleep one night, and her first impression was, though it was not the fact, that the house was on fire. As she was about rising up to give the alarm, the thought occurred instantly—Why do any thing? If it is decreed the house shall be burnt and I with it, it will be so; but if it is determed I shall escape and the house be preserved, it will be so. I will therefore remain silent and do nothing. But she soon found it to be impossible for her to rest quietly in this situation. She was more and more distressed; and by this circumstance, was led to see the weakness and folly of her excuse, and the unreasonableness of her former application of the doctrine of election. At times, she viewed herself to be a great sinner, and justly deserving eternal condemnation. She often prayed, or attempted to pray, but she was sensible, that all her prayers flowed from a selfish, unhumiliated, and unsubmitive heart. At length, when she had resorted to every expedient she could devise to get relief, and had done every thing, as she then thought, to secure the salvation of her soul, to no purpose, she left her father's house, one day, bowed down with a sense of her guilt, and with the expectation she should never return, but must die and be lost forever. She then viewed herself to be upon the very threshold of the eternal world; for her long continued distress and anxiety of mind had had a very serious effect upon her bodily health. During this period of extreme concern, she even desired, not so much on her own account, as for the sake of her parents, that she might, in some way, leave some evidence, that possibly it might be well with her hereafter. After spending some time in walking the fields, not knowing where she went, she returned back, and went into the barn. And in order to secrete herself so as not to be discovered, she ascended the ladder to the highest scaffold, and seated herself down upon a bundle of straw. Here she began seriously to reflect upon her past conduct—how she had refused the offers of divine mercy—how she had, all her life, neglected the great salvation—how much she had found fault with her Maker, for doing what he will with his own—how much she deserved what she had so much feared—how right and just it

would be in God to cast her off, and treat her according to the greatness of her sins.—After musing in this way for a considerable time, she found herself saying over in an audible voice, these words, O the happiness of giving up! O the happiness of giving up! The fear of punishment left her; though she had as yet no expectation of being saved, or that such a sinner as she was, ever could be saved. She soon rose from her seat, descended the ladder and went into the house with a cheerful countenance. Her mother immediately inferred from her appearance, that her distress of mind had left her. Though she had not for sometime any idea that she had experienced a radical change of heart, such a change as entitles to eternal life; yet she knew, that she felt reconciled to the justice and sovereignty of God, and could cheerfully trust herself to his wise disposal, believing that the Judge of all the earth will do right. Hence, she felt calm and composed; and was joyful and happy. In the course of one or two days, as she began to reflect more upon the nature of her new feelings, the thought came suddenly into her mind, that she had experienced such a change as the Bible requires; and she began to hope.—Such are some of the most material facts in her religious experience, as several times related by herself. After some months prayerful meditation, she offered herself as a candidate for admission into the visible church; and was admitted a member of the Congregational church, in Holden, Dec. 7, 1817.

After making a profession of religion, she gave increasing evidence of her attachment to the cause, which she had openly espoused. She never appeared to be afraid to speak in vindication of divine truth. Both by precept and example, she recommended the religion of the gospel. And when she thought herself called upon to administer reproof, she always did it in such a manner, as to disarm opposition of all its weapons. Even the tongue of slander was forced to be silent: it could find no occasion to speak against her, except it was concerning the law of her God; for she was very careful to maintain a regular and consistent course of conduct. Her fondness for knowledge led her to devote considerable portion of her leisure time to the investigation of religious truth. Whenever she had an opportunity to converse with any one, from whom she thought she could derive instruction, some topic of christian doctrine, duty or experience, engaged her attention. And to this it is owing, that she became, in the course of a few years, so well acquainted with the great system of revealed truth. As she was fond of argument, and possessed an investigating mind, she never appeared to be willing to receive any opinion without close examination. She was disposed to think for herself on all subjects, which she was led to contemplate. The sentiments of those, with whom she was called to associate, were treated with deference, but were not allowed to take the place of evidence.

In the fall of 1819, she spent some time in the Academy at Amherst, where she formed some valuable acquaintances. From this

period, the circle of her friends increased rapidly. She opened and continued a correspondence with many persons of high standing in society. And by her engaging manners, and amiable deportment, she gained the esteem of all those, with whom she became acquainted. While at Amherst, she wrote to her parents in the following strain.—

“Having an opportunity to send a line to Holden, it is with pleasure I seize the present moment, in order to write a few words to my ever dear and affectionate parents. O my parents, you cannot imagine the emotions of my heart, when one of the young ladies came into the academy, and told me there were some persons in the tavern from Holden, who wished to see me. Judge what joy it gave me to hear from my nearest and dearest friends on earth. I knew not whether you were in health or sickness, in prosperity or adversity. I went immediately to the place, and to my great satisfaction, I found one of Mr. F.’s sons, and Miss M. S. who was going to her father’s in C.—Mr. F. told me he should return on Monday, and if I wished to write, he would call and carry my letter.—They said that brother had not gone the Monday before, but heard he was going that week. Is it possible he had not then set out on his journey? I hope, my dear parents, you felt calm and resigned, and considered, that the same Almighty hand, which brought him into being, and has preserved him, is able to preserve him now, and that not a single evil will befall him beyond what he sees to be best. We know not but the Lord has put it into his heart to go there, in order to bring about his purpose, in the conversion of his precious soul. I trust, my parents, it is my prayer, as well as yours, that the kind hand of providence may attend him wherever he goes, and return him home soon to his friends, in health and safety, rejoicing in the goodness of God. O my parents, what a privilege it is, that we can pray for him, and for each other. It is not of much consequence where we live; but it is of the greatest consequence how we live. You know not how much I have thought of brother; he lies very near my heart. The sincere desire and prayer of my heart is, that we all might lead such lives, as to be prepared to meet in that world where we shall meet to part no more forever. Did you know, my parents, how much I want to hear from you, and the particulars of my brother’s going away, you would contrive some way to send me a letter. I would inform you, that I am well, and contented, if I could only hear from home every week. I am pleased with my school and boarding place.”—

For several seasons in succession, she was engaged in her favorite employment of keeping school. Wherever she taught, she gained the affection of her pupils, and gave general, if not universal satisfaction. It was her uniform practice, either to open or close her school with prayer. In one or two instances, she was placed in circumstances, which were peculiarly trying to her feelings. “What shall I do, if objections are raised against my praying in school? I am going to engage where I am told some do not approve the practice; and it is thought they will make objections?” After consulting with one or two intimate friends on the subject, she came to the conclusion, it could not be her duty to be engaged in any employment where God must not be acknowledged, and where she could not be indulged the privilege of looking to him for a blessing on her labours. She resolved, therefore, to go forward, and do what she conceived to be duty; and if her employers were dissatisfied, she should choose rather to leave, than violate solemn obligation. With this determination, she commenced her school,

but the difficulties which she thought she had reason to anticipate, never occurred.

Though she was much employed either in keeping, or going to school; yet she was always ready, when at home, to lend her aid, and do what was required in the management of the family concerns. It was also her delight to visit the poor and distressed, and to render them all the assistance in her power. She never appeared to consider it a task, or as degrading to be engaged in any lawful employment, or to perform any service that might benefit a fellow being. She was taught to believe, that though she might acquire much useful knowledge, yet her education would be essentially defective, unless she knew how to perform the various kinds of work which the wants of a family necessarily require, and she practised accordingly.

Twice, in the course of three or four years after she made a profession of religion, she was brought apparently to the very borders of the grave. Once by a lung complaint, of which she never wholly recovered, and once by a fever. Though much attached to her parents, brothers and sisters, and other near friends, she could say, Not as I will, but as thou wilt. As she appeared to have so much confidence in the rectitude of the divine character and government as to believe God knew best how to dispose of her; so she appeared to trust herself to his sovereign disposal. His wise and holy sovereignty was to her a rich source of consolation.

In the spring of 1823, she went to the Female Seminary in Saugus; and there spent six months. Here she gained the approbation of her teachers, and became acquainted with many young ladies of the first respectability, whose friendship she ever afterwards highly valued. She has often said, it was the most profitable school to her, she ever attended. She was highly pleased with the method of instruction there pursued, and afterwards adopted it herself, so far as occasion offered.

The following are extracts from letters which were written to her parents, brothers and sister, while at Saugus.

"My dear parents, what can be more heart reviving to children, when far distant from kindred, friends, and home, than to sit down and unbosom their feelings to those dear friends, who brought them into existence, who watched over their days of infancy, childhood, and youth, with the tenderest solicitude, and whose prayers and tears have followed them to the time when they enter upon the stage of action. Surely nothing in this world can be more gratifying to children who love their parents in any degree as they ought. A sermon from these words, in the morning, "Time is short," has led me to think much of my beloved father and mother. I have been led to reflect, how short the time will be, at the longest, that I can enjoy your society, your instructions, your prayers. You have already passed the meridian of life, and must soon know the realities of a never ending eternity. But though I am in youth, it is very possible I may go first. Soon you may be called to see the remains of your daughter conveyed to the cold, silent, and lonely mansions of the dead. If so, I shall be delivered from the extreme anguish of taking a farewell look of a beloved parent. It is of but little importance who goes first, if we are only prepared to greet each other in those realms of glory, where the

parting sound is never permitted to enter. But be this as it may, our time is short; what we do, must be done quickly. Now, my dear parents, have you not children, who are near to your hearts, who possess an immortal part, which can never die? Will you not pray much for them? Every day you live, and every night you retire to rest, O think, that you have one less to put up a petition for the souls of your children. If you offer the fervant and effectual prayer of the righteous, it will avail much, and we may reap the benefit of your prayers many years after your bodies are slumbering in the dust. Be assured, dear parents, if Millecent knows any thing what prayer is, she knows what it is to pray earnestly for her very dear parents, brothers and sisters. Not a day, nor a waking hour, nor scarcely a sleeping hour, passes, but that I think of them. There is nothing in the world my heart so anxiously desires, if I am not deceived, as the salvation of my dear friends. I know that if we should work and toil, and gain the whole world, and lose our souls, it would profit us nothing. I know too, that if we should meet with all the troubles, crosses, and disappointments of this life, but secure the salvation of our souls, we have all things. In a short time, some heavenly angel will be commissioned to take our departing spirits, and convey them into the arms of the dear Redeemer. That this may be the happy lot of all our dear family, let us plead earnestly, and never be discouraged, till the last pulse shall have ceased to beat in death.'—

"My expectations with respect to the advantages of this place are as yet more than realized. May I ever be grateful to my Maker for the privileges I enjoy; and may I ever show forth my gratitude, by devoting my talents, my life, my all, to the service of him who groaned, and bled, and died, that sinners might live. But I must soon close; but not without first earnestly entreating you to pray much for me, that I may prove a blessing while I live, and be prepared for a never ending eternity. O eternity! Is it possible, that we, my dear parents, shall ever commence an eternity. Yes, it is as certain as there is a God. Solemn thought! Are we prepared?"—

"My dear brothers and sister, Will it be some satisfaction to receive a few lines from Millecent? It certainly will be to her to write, then, and greater still would it be to receive some lines from you. Write, and tell me all about your affairs.—But above all, tell me whether you ever think you must die, and be happy or miserable forever? If it is so unpleasant to be parted on earth a little time, how dreadful the thought of being parted forever?—How piercing would it be, if when we meet at the great judgment day, the Saviour should say to some of us, depart from me into everlasting punishment! then if any of us should be so happy as to be placed on the right hand, there would be an eternal separation! Who can bear the thought? Will you not, dear brothers and sister, give your hearts to Christ, who loves those that seek him early? Remember your Creator while young; then we shall meet in heaven, where we shall never be called to part, and where all is joy and peace. Your affectionate sister, &c.

"My dear father and mother, Never can I express to you the satisfaction it gave me to receive a letter from my dear parents. When I reflected that among all your cares and anxieties, Millecent was not forgotten, and that you should take pains to write to me, it warmed my heart with affection, and filled my eyes with tears. How shall I repay you for all the favours you have done me, ever since my existence commenced! How shall I express my gratitude? I can only say, that in return for your favours, may you find in me, a tender affectionate, and obedient daughter; and I can assure you, dear parents, that if I do not know the love, which you feel for a child, I very well know what it is to love father and mother, brothers and sisters, and if not deceived, I know what it is to raise to God an ardent desire, that he would so far as is consistent with his will, grant them a blessing in all their temporal concerns. But far above this, do I feel a desire, that their souls may be washed in the precious blood of Christ, and never realize that awful despair, which awaits the impenitent sinner.—In all your anxieties, troubles and perplexities, let this consoling thought ever attend you—The Lord reigns. My

beloved parents, we are professors of religion. May we show to the world, that we are real possessors, by our daily walk and conversation; and not be the means by our coldness and indifference, of pressing onward to destruction, those who are so very near our hearts. Do pray much for your children. How it would soften the rugged path of life, and comfort me in my way, to have one dear brother or sister, with whom I could take sweet counsel on heavenly things." With regard to her staying a second term at Saugus, she thus writes. "There are several considerations, which lead me to feel very anxious to stay. I do think this school one of the best in the world. But I do not desire to have my dear father do any thing which he cannot consistently, on my account; neither do I wish to act contrary to my parents advice or opinion. I am willing, and desire to be dictated by those who feel, as I trust, so deeply interested in my present and eternal welfare."

The following was written while at Saugus to a Society in Holden, of which she was a member.

"Dear Sisters—In compliance with your request, and agreeable to my own wishes, I shall employ a few moments this afternoon, in conversing with you through the medium of writing. But what shall I write? how shall I address you, in a manner conducive to your happiness, or productive of good to your little community? It is not without a deep sense of my feeble acquirements and inadequateness, that I attempt the pleasing task. But I hope and trust, that a few lines, dictated by one, who is permitted to sustain the endearing relationship of sister, and whose heart glows with ardent solicitude for your usefulness and prosperity, will meet with a welcome reception.

I have this afternoon reverted to the commencement of our little band, when with trembling fear and anxious hope, we formed ourselves into a little circle, denominated, 'The Female Reading and Charitable Society.' I have traced its feeble, but steady steps from month to month, from year to year, and at the conclusion, desire to bless God for being one of the favoured number. Though we have much reason to be humble, that our hearts have been so cold, our exertions so feeble, and that we have done so little, compared with what we might have done; yet in view of the blessings we have enjoyed as a society, we have much reason to rejoice. It is true, afflictions have been intermingled with our comforts; the cruel destroyer, death, has been permitted to invade our society, and remove some of its members, leaving the remnant to feel the wound their exit had made. While mourning their loss, another sister, one of the chief pillars of the society, whose fervent prayers, whose sisterly counsel and exhortations, whose active and vigorous exertions, had imparted cheerfulness to all around her, was called to leave us forever. Yes, we were called to extend the parting hand, the last look to that dear friend, through whose chief instrumentality, this society owes its origin. But while we deeply feel her loss, how great is our cause for gratitude, that, instead of leaving us to go to a distant region to acquire riches or fame, she was willing to leave father, brothers and sisters, and many things else her heart held dear, to cross the mighty deep, and engage in that same glorious work, which she so ardently endeavoured to promote, while at home. Can we view this example of one of our number, who was willing to forego the comforts of life for the good of souls, and remain inactive? No: we cannot, we must not. Who would be denied the privilege of lending their aid in the glorious cause of extending light and knowledge to those, who know not there is a God to be worshipped, a heaven of pure and holy joy to be obtained, or a hell of sin and misery to be shunned?

How deeply ought we to feel for the heathen—we who are permitted to range in our native land, to move in circles of surrounding friends, to hear the gospel published from Sabbath to Sabbath, and are favoured with a daily perusal of those lucid pages of God's word, from which we profess to derive all our consolation, hope and support? While we contemplate the sacred worth of these blessings, can we be unwilling to employ our time, our talents, and all we possess, so far as is consistent with duty, to disseminate

them to earth's remotest bounds? Let us, then, my sisters, be active; time is short that we can work; let us spend the precious season allotted us, in devising and executing plans for doing good. None of us are so situated, but that if we have hearts desirous of usefulness, we may find much to do. None are excluded from this enterprise for the want of employment. We know that our measures are small; all our labours and donations are but a mite, compared with the vast treasures of the Lord. But where would be the coast of the extending ocean, should all the drops absent themselves from that huge abyss? Do not the most minute particles help form the mighty mass? Let us, then, take courage. Though our numbers are few, and our contributions small; yet how delightful the idea of uniting our feeble efforts, with that vast tide of benevolence, which is rising and spreading, and is destined, as we trust, to overflow and water the whole earth. O may we not hope to be the happy instruments of alleviating the sorrows of the poor and distressed around us, of causing the hearts of the far distant Hindoo and Hottentot to rejoice; and bring blessings upon ourselves in answer to the broken, but heartfelt petitions of our red sisters in the West.

But let us remember, that human means, unassisted by divine agency, will avail nothing. To God we must look for a blessing. Should we, by our exertions, be the means of enlightening the whole world, we can never expect a personal blessing, without right views of the glory of God. Should we possess the liberal spirit of Boudinot, and have not true love, we shall be found like 'sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.' While we are endeavouring externally to obey the divine injunction of sending the gospel to all nations, how deplorable would be our condition, if at the judgment seat of Christ, the poor degraded African should rise up and condemn us, that we had enjoyed the blessings of the gospel in rich profusion, but had neglected to obey from the heart its heavenly precepts."

In the spring of 1824, she engaged, with another amiable young woman, and opened a school for young ladies, at Rutland, which was continued six months. Instruction was given, in all the branches, usually taught in female seminaries. Here she gained, as also her partner, the affection and confidence of her pupils; and received frequent and unequivocal testimonies of the entire approbation of her employers. It was ever her object to advance her scholars, but she considered it an object of primary importance, that they should advance understandingly. Hence she spared no pains to explain and illustrate all their studies; and she generally succeeded; for she could communicate her thoughts on any subject, which she understood, with the greatest readiness, freedom and facility.

The following letter to her husband, from the Rev. Mr. Clark, will confirm the above remarks.

RUTLAND April 6 1827.

Rev. and dear Sir,—Though I am not peculiarly partial to biographical sketches, there may be instances, in which it would be wrong to withhold from the world the moral and religious excellences of a departed friend.

Your much lamented wife, during her short continuance here, exhibited such a spirit of active benevolence, such devotedness to the cause of Christ, and appeared to be so under the influence of pure and elevated motives, and held out the promise of such extensive usefulness in the sphere, in which Providence had placed her, as to more than justify one in publishing to the world her excellent traits of character. She seemed to be every way fitted for the situation she held. While she resided with us, she, by her winning manners, by her affectionate and benevolent disposition, and by her fervent piety, made

an impression upon the minds of many, which can never be erased. She had the happy talent of presenting religion in such a form as to silence opposition, and to cause even the enemies of the cross to look on, and admire.

The school kept by her and Miss Sylvester, (now Mrs. Smith) produced such an influence in favour of religion, as to be visible now, and will be felt by individuals, I hope, through eternity. And probably, that school had no small influence in preparing the way, for the unusual attention to religion, which has been manifested here this winter.

A short time previous to the close of the school, I preached from these words, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth" In the introduction I observed "I have indulged the hope that the private school in this place would not only be highly advantageous to those who attended, but would inspire *our youth* with the love of moral and religious excellence; and lead them to pursue their way to glory, honour and immortality. The system, on which this school has been managed, is peculiarly adapted to the formation of elevated principles, and of pure and dignified virtue. Religion has been so happily blended in the literary exercises of the pupils, and so feelingly and affectionately have they had their thoughts directed to that Being, who has endued man with unlimited powers of mind, as to lead me to hope that they would not have resisted these attractions, and ere this, would have cheerfully acknowledged, the instructions brought down to us in the gospel of Jesus Christ to be infinitely superior to all worldly wisdom." In another part of the sermon I find these words, "The plan on which your course of instruction has been conducted, has a tendency to lead you to serious reflection. It has always been my opinion that no course of instruction can be good, that is not founded on religious principles, or which does not make the Bible its basis."

This school was daily closed with prayer by your wife. Though this was a novel sight to most of the pupils, perfect stillness and solemnity were observed during the exercise. Every Saturday interesting portions of scripture were given out for Monday-morning lessons, in addition to this each student was required to give an account of the sermons she had heard on the sabbath.

Some of the students were at first a little opposed to these exercises, and observed they did not attend the school to study the Bible and hear prayers. But they soon became as much interested in these, as in any of the branches of education, to which their attention was directed—The young ladies were so much attached to their Instructors, and were so much pleased with their management, as to be willing to pursue any course they should direct—Indeed I was never in a school where more perfect confidence and affection seem to exist between the pupils and their teachers; and I never saw a school conducted on a more judicious plan or which, for so short a time was productive of greater good. Much more might be said, but perhaps this is sufficient. I feel as if you and your people had met with an irreparable loss. This overwhelming event is one of the mysteries of Providence—let us be still and know that the Judge of all the earth has done right.—

Yours with respect J. Clarke

The following remarks are contained in an address, which she delivered at the close of her school.

'Beloved pupils,—How grateful ought we to be, that we live in a country, and in an age, where the reproach, which is attached to the female character in India, is wiped away; where we can enjoy opportunities and advantages for cultivating, improving and enlarging the mind; where such knowledge may be obtained as will soften the rugged path of life, and which, if once obtained, will prove a rich source of enjoyment to ourselves; will seem to make us more pleasing and interesting to our parents, more useful to society; and tend to sweeten the loneliness of our declining years. Since knowledge is so essential to our happiness and usefulness, be solicitous, my friends, to obtain it. Lose no opportunity allowed you, for the improvement of your

minds. Be emulous to add to what you have already acquired. Never think you have completed your education, and that you have nothing more to learn till the close of life. But remember, my dear friends, that should you acquire all worldly knowledge, and possess even the wisdom of Solomon, the learning of Paul, the eloquence of Apollos, but without their piety, it would profit you nothing. What if you should gain the whole world, and lose your own souls? Did I not point you beyond this inch of time, and press this subject upon you, I should not feel as though I had acted the part of a real friend. It is my heart's desire, to have you secure that part while young, which can never be taken from you. The endearing relation of teacher and pupils, this day ceases. Probably I shall no more meet you in this world. But I shall meet you again. Yes, I shall meet you at the judgment seat of Christ, where we must each one render a strict account of the manner we have spent our time this season. And O may we be able to render such account, not only of this summer, but of all our lives, as to be prepared to meet on the right hand of God, where our hearts will be no more pained at the thought of separation, but where we shall unite with the redeemed from among men in the song of Moses and the Lamb."

When her school had closed, she began to make preparation for entering upon a new sphere of usefulness and labour, and was married, Feb. 1, 1825. Before this event took place, she viewed the station which she expected to fill, as very important, and highly responsible; and accordingly she did not treat it in a light and trifling manner, but made it the subject of much serious reflection and prayer.

Soon after being married, she removed to Sangerfield, where she spent the remainder of her useful and valuable life. No sooner had she begun to move in her new connexion, than she began to take a lively interest in the welfare of the church and society with which she became associated, and did all in her power, both by conversation and example, to recommend the religion of the gospel. She had not been in her new station many weeks before she conceived the design of forming a "Female Reading and Benevolent Society;" and in the course of three or four months, succeeded in effecting her purpose. The number of members at the first meeting was about twelve, but they soon increased to more than forty. The objects which she proposed to accomplish by such a society, were the improvement of its members by reading and social intercourse; the supply of destitute families with the sacred scriptures; and the furnishing of such parents and their children, as were not able to do it themselves, with suitable apparel to attend religious worship on the sabbath. She accordingly visited many families, generally however, in connexion with some other member of the society, for the purpose of seeking out proper objects of benevolent effort. Though she had some prejudices to meet, and difficulties to encounter, yet she was never discouraged, but pressed forward with the greater activity and zeal.

In the social circle, whether at home or abroad, the great subject of religion was generally her theme. She never appeared to be satisfied to spend an afternoon or evening without introducing some point of christian doctrine, duty, or experience, as a topic of con-

versation. Though she was ever disposed to contend earnestly for those great truths which she regarded as the faith, once delivered to the saints ; yet she always treated those who differed from her with much tenderness and respect. Though she expressed her belief decidedly, and knew how to press an argument, and meet objections ; yet she was not overbearing, but mild and winning in her manner of address.

In her family, she was invariably kind and affectionate ; and managed its concerns with much prudence, economy and circumspection. To her husband, she was a helper indeed. She regarded it as an object of vital importance to the cause of true religion, that revealed truth should be fully, clearly and distinctly preached. It was her heart's desire and unceasing prayer, that he might be led to exhibit faithfully and fearlessly, and regardless of consequences, the whole counsel of God. She used to say, that what God had seen fit to reveal, in his own word, concerning himself, his own character and government, must be profitable. Did truth excite opposition ? she would refer immediately to the history of prophets and apostles. By every means in her power, she endeavoured to afford encouragement to the faithful performance of duty. Her own situation in this life, and the situation of her family, were, in her view, objects of small importance, when compared with the glory of God, and the salvation of men, which she was sensible is suspended upon their understanding, believing and loving the great truths of the gospel. She often expressed a willingness to go anywhere, or do any thing, or suffer any thing, for the truth's sake.

The following are extracts from letters, which were written to her friends in the course of the summer of 1825.

" My dear brother and sister,—Neither time nor health will admit of my writing much more, at present ; but I cannot do justice to my feelings to close this letter, without asking what is the state of your minds ? How does the revival of religion in Holden affect you ? Can you remain unmoved, unconcerned about the eternal welfare of your precious souls ? Do be entreated, my beloved brother and sister, now while God is pouring out his spirit, in that place, and waiting to be gracious, to attend to the concerns of eternity. Do not put it off. Soon it may be forever too late. Secure an interest in Christ, and you have every thing ; neglect it, and you lose your souls for a never ending eternity. The news, that you had given your hearts to God, and tasted of his love, would cheer my lonely moments, and bring joy inexpressible to my heart. That such news may reach my ears, I shall not cease to pray." " Is it possible, that we, children of the same parents, who have been clothed by the same hands, fed from the same table, who have played and talked and wept together, who have spent so much of our time in each other's society, are now, even if our lives should be spared to an advanced age, to spend together but few more days in this world ? It certainly is ; though it is what I cannot realize. But, my dear brother and sister, it is matter of little consequence with regard to our separation in this world ; but O how insupportable would be the thought, that we must be separated to all eternity ! Should this be the case, one soul would be as holy and happy as it possibly could be, while the other would be as sinful and wretched as it possibly could be. But should we meet in the world of despair, it would be no alleviation ; we should probably go there prepared to be great tormentors of

each other. On the other hand, should we be permitted to enter that world where all is purity, we should probably go prepared to increase each other's happiness to all eternity. Let us then be wise, while it is an accepted time, and attain that preparation of heart which a holy God will be pleased to accept. Be entreated to reflect, that it can profit you nothing, should you gain the whole world, and lose your own souls."

"My dear father and mother,—Will your daughter no more return to sit with you, and be considered one of your family circle? Probably not. She may, and she hopes to visit you; but those visits must soon be interrupted by again extending the parting hand, and uttering the word farewell. But O my parents, our separation in this world will be short, and it is of but little consequence, whether the few days we have to spend on earth, be spent together, or apart. After a few more revolving suns, and we shall have commenced an eternal state of existence. And O my dear father and mother, are we prepared to greet each other's spirits, where the farewell sound is never heard, and where we may unite together to all eternity in singing the praises of God and the Lamb? My heart has not forgotten to beat for your temporal welfare; but it beats more ardently for your eternal good. Your days are almost spent; and will you permit a child, who loves her parents most affectionately, to entreat you to deny yourselves—to lay aside worldly concerns, as much as in your power, and live in such a manner as to be prepared to welcome death with a smile, and sweetly sleep in Jesus. Will you pray much for your child, that she may not, at last, find herself deceived, and be forever debarred from the society of those she loves on earth, and all holy beings. Though, my dear father, we still most ardently hope, that you may again be restored to health, yet I am very desirous you should, while in this feeble state, reflect much on death, and the nature of that preparation of heart, necessary to meet it. Are we the children of God, come life, or come death, all is ours; but if not, all is lost forever. While you are unable to attend much to the concerns of this world, let even a child entreat you to place your mind much on things future. Read much, meditate much, and pray much; then, when death shall come, be it soon, or many years hence, you may be prepared to welcome it with a smile, and go to that world, where the wicked cease from troubling, and where all will be holiness and happiness forever. I hope to hear, that you are recovering your health; but above every thing else, I do desire to hear, that your heart is filled with love to God, living as he requires, with perfect submission to his government and will."

Sometime in November, she received the unwelcome intelligence that the health of her father declined so rapidly, as to destroy all hope of his recovery. She then wrote as follows:

"My beloved mother—When my husband wrote the first page of this letter, I felt as if I could not write, not knowing in what situation it would find the family. But I do not know how to refrain from writing, though I am entirely at a loss for words to express my feelings. Had we received those lines from Miss D.—as soon as we usually receive letters from Holden, and did I know the situation of the family, I think I should find something to write. But how painful to be in a state of suspense, to know nothing of the situation of dear friends? Could you know the many pictures of my father's family which my imagination portrays, you would surely think my situation peculiarly trying. When I think of my dear father, and know not whether he is in the land of the living, or whether his spirit is in eternity, together with the trials of my dear mother, brothers and sisters, and reflect that I am far away, not permitted to mingle our sympathies, or shed our tears together, it seems more than I can bear; but it is all right. God is good; and may we all feel from the heart to say, Thy will be done. But when reflecting on your case, my tender mother, it is a great consolation to me, that you have, as I trust, a heavenly Father, to whom you can go, and pour out the sorrows of your soul, and find him a God near at hand, and not afar off. In these seasons of retirement, plead earnestly for your children, that they may be adopted into

the family of Christ—be prepared for the trials of this life, and for the employments of a better world. You wish me to write to my father; but how can I? Is he living, or is he not? I think I shall try to write a few words, and if he has his reason, and is living, I wish you to read them to him; if not, O striking thought! let them be destroyed.

"My dear father—The afflictive news has reached me, that you were very feeble, and it was feared you would not recover. When I heard of it, I felt a great desire to write to you, but thought my feelings too tender, and my fortitude too weak, to perform the duty. But indulging the hope, that you may yet live, and be a blessing to your family, to society, and the church of Christ, I am induced to write a few lines, hoping they will prove a source of comfort to you. Should I tell you of the poignancy of my grief, it would be of but little satisfaction; for I know the affection of friends, and all other things of a worldly nature, can appear of but little importance to one who is laid upon a sick bed, from which he thinks it probable he shall never be raised. The character of God, and the character of his own heart, ought then to engage much of the attention. My dear father, your daughter, who is now writing to you with a pained heart, feels as though she could not part with you; but she knows, that if you are not called to leave her, she soon must be called to leave you; and it is a matter of small moment, who goes first, if we are only prepared to welcome each other to a better world, where we can forever unite together in a holy employment. But the great question ought to be with us, are we prepared for this holy place? are we reconciled to God? In order to decide this question, we should meditate much on his holy character and government, and see whether we love him because he is holy; and examine closely our own hearts, and see whether we hate sin because it is committed against a holy being; and whether we have true love to him, and feel an unreserved submission to his will, wishing to have his glory advanced, whatever becomes of us. It is a very easy thing to think we are reconciled to the will of God, because we hope he will save us; but to feel to rejoice in him, whether we are saved or lost, because we know he does all things right, is a great thing; so great, I think, that impenitent sinners never feel it; and no greater than all who are saved must and do feel. O my father, I hope and trust, you think much on eternal things. Examine your heart closely, that whether you live or die, it may be well with you. If it can be God's will, may you live, and bless your daughter."

Soon after she wrote the above, she visited her father's house; and in two days after her arrival, saw him lie cold in death. It was a severe trial to her feelings to be parted from a parent, for whom she had ever cherished such ardent affection. But her confidence in God seemed to be unabated; and she was supported beyond her expectations. She appeared to derive much satisfaction from the consoling thought, that God had done it. At the solicitation of her afflicted mother, she concluded to spend a few weeks with her. In the mean time, as the duties of a minister are pressing, her husband returned to his people. While with her mother, she wrote to him as follows:

"My friends manifest some concern in regard to my health. My cough has been rather troublesome since you left. But I hope and think I shall soon be better. But we must die, how soon we know not—sufficient for us to know, that God will take us in his own best time. But I tremble when I think how hard would be the separation from my very dear husband. O may we ever possess submissive hearts to the will of God, rejoicing that he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

By the first of January, 1826, she returned to her family, accompanied by her youngest brother. In a few days after she had

reached her home, she wrote to her mother, and expressed herself in the following strain :

“Thus, my mother, you see, that a kind Providence watched over us, defended us through dangers upon dangers, seen and unseen, and returned us safely to our friends, and to our destined place. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and let all that is within me, bless his holy name. O that I might now unreservedly devote myself, and all that I possess, to the service of God, and feel from the heart to say, Do with me and mine, as seemeth good in thy sight. My dear mother, had I room in this letter, I should wish to say much in trying to comfort you under your deep affliction. But I have a wound in my own heart, which bleeds at the remembrance of past events. Let us ever cherish an unreserved submission to the will of God; and cheerfully say, Do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee.”

But she was destined soon to experience new trials. For several weeks, she was in a state of suspense in respect to the life of her eldest brother. But near the close of the month of February, she received a letter, which she knew to be in her brother's own hand writing, and its first appearance gave her much joy. With such feelings, she began to read; but the first line communicated to her the sad intelligence, that the spirit of her dear mother had suddenly fled, and gone to the eternal world. For a time, she seemed to be overwhelmed with grief; her repeated afflictions seemed to be more than she could bear; but she soon recovered her wonted calmness and composure of mind. And though she mourned the loss of her parents to the day of her death, yet she appeared to mourn with true christian submission. In a letter to her mother-in-law, written a little before her own dissolution, she says, ‘It became me, at the time of the death of my own dear mother, and it becomes me still, to cherish an unreserved submission to the will of God; and to feel and to say from the heart, as Job did, The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.’

May 12, 1826, she removed her relation from the church in Holden, and united with the congregational church, where she resided. It was quite a trial to her feelings to leave the church, to which her parents had belonged, where many of her youthful associates then lived, and where she first made an open profession of her faith in Christ, and entered into solemn covenant with God, and his people: but she did it cheerfully, because she conceived it to be her duty so to do.

Soon after this, she was solicited to open a private school, as several young ladies wished to put themselves under her care and instruction. At first she hesitated, as she knew it would greatly increase her cares and anxiety; though she finally consented, with the expectation of having only a few individuals. But when she came to open her school, she found herself surrounded with twenty-five or six, a number sufficiently large to employ her whole time and attention. She was much interested in her school; and did all in her power to instruct those, that were committed to her charge.

It was her uniform practice, every Monday morning, to have her pupils give her an account of what they had heard the preceeding Sabbath. She supposed it would have a tendency to strengthen and improve their memories ; and it also afforded her a favourable opportunity for impressing divine truth upon their minds. She continued her school, to the satisfaction of all, for three months, and then closed it with the expectation she should never teach any more ; not because she was not pleased with the employment, but because she found the cares of a family, and the cares of a school, too much for her health to sustain.

Through the summer and fall, she was unusually active and engaged in the cause of truth. Though very cheerful, she appeared serious and solemn. Eternal realities occupied her thoughts a considerable portion of the time. The divine character, as delineated in the sacred scriptures, together with his all wise and all perfect government, as exercised in rolling onward the great system of events to the final accomplishment of his own holy purposes, were the great subjects of her delightful contemplation. Hence she regarded those great and sublime truths of the gospel, which bring into view God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, with uncommon interest. The doctrines of the bible appeared to be the source of all her comfort and consolation. She did not regard them with indifference, or as matters of cold speculation. They warmed her heart, and filled her with holy joy. It seemed to be matter of rejoicing in her view, that the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, working all things after the counsel of his own will. Though, as she was jealous of her own heart, she would sometimes say, she feared her attachment to these consoling truths was all selfish. It evidently appeared, however, to be a matter of joyful consideration to her, that she was in the hands of a holy and just God, who knew how to dispose of her so as to promote his own glory.

The first sabbath in January, the delicate state of her health rendered her attendance on divine worship unadvisable. But it was a great trial to her feelings to be deprived the privilege of meeting with the solemn assembly. The thought of staying away caused her to weep freely. She esteemed it not only a duty, but a great privilege to worship God in public with his people. But she never had another opportunity. She was soon to be introduced to an assembly far more august, solemn and interesting, than any thing to be found in this world. After the close of religious worship, on the last sabbath of this month, she made some inquiries in relation to the exercises of the day, and conversed freely for several hours. She related the peculiar exercises of her own mind for the two past years, and gave some account of her former views and feelings. She expressed, in the course of the conversation, her full belief in the doctrine of the divine decrees, in the doctrine of election, and its counterpart, reprobation ; in the doctrine of the universal agency of God, in connexion with the free moral and accountable agen-

cy of his creatures; in the doctrine of disinterested benevolence, and unconditional submission; and in the doctrine of salvation through the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. She stated, that about the time of her removal to this place, she was greatly distressed in her own mind for several weeks, in view of the doctrine of the universal agency of God, and in view of some of its kindred doctrines. She doubted whether she could have been a real christian, and have remained so long with the bible in her hand, without investigating their truth, and trying to understand them; though, as she then observed, she had never felt any disposition to say they could not be true. She had conversed with several distinguished clergymen, on the subject of the divine efficiency, and was convinced that it was a doctrine clearly taught in the word of truth. She said, "the more I examined the subject, the more sensible I was that the bible was full of that very doctrine, against which so much is spoken. But I could not see *how* the agency of God could be exerted in causing every event that comes to pass both in the natural and moral world; and yet men be free, voluntary and accountable beings. But I found the bible so full of the doctrine, that I must either admit it, or give up the doctrine of election and the sovereignty of God, which I had always believed. I could not defend the latter, without admitting the former. And not only so, I found that I must either admit its truth, or give up the bible, which I was not prepared to do." Here she paused for a moment, and then observed with much feeling and interest, "I found relief in the same manner as I did when I think I first experienced a change of heart." She continued, "I reflected that I was bound to believe what God had said was true—that whatever he does must be right; and though I could not now see how his agency in causing every event to take place as it does, could be consistent with the moral freedom of his creatures; yet the time would come when I should see it to be both consistent and just. I then felt relieved; my distress left me. From that time to this, I have found but little difficulty on these subjects." She believed these truths, and ever afterwards zealously defended them, because she was persuaded they were fully revealed. In the course of the conversation, she became very much animated, wept freely, and expressed herself in the following strain—"O, I do want to see God, and I expect to see him soon. Heaven appears to me more and more like a desirable place, not so much because it is a place of happiness, as because these truths will shine. There God will be seen just as he is; there no one will ever wish to hide his true character. I fear sometimes that my love to him and to his holy truth is all selfish; but it does appear to me, that if I can only see the justice of God in all that he does, I shall be satisfied, let what will become of me. It must certainly be an alleviation to those that are cast off, to know and feel, that God is treating them justly: it certainly appears so to me." She believed in the doctrine of unconditional submission, not only

because it is contained in the bible, but because she felt such confidence in God, she could cheerfully and unreservedly submit herself to his wise and sovereign disposal. Her own interest did not seem to be the great object of her pursuit; there was another interest, which she appeared to regard with much delight and supreme affection—even the glory of God, and the highest good of the universe. She often compared herself to a mere speck in the scale of existence, and often said, that it was matter of little consequence what became of her, if these great objects could only be secured. During the period above mentioned, she appeared to contemplate death with the greatest degree of composure, though she was much affected. She had upon her mind at this time a most vivid impression, that she had but a short time to live in this world. Indeed she had had such an impression for some weeks. When the hour of supper arrived, she waited upon the table with her usual cheerfulness, and eat as much as she had, at any one time, for several weeks previous. After tea she again entered into conversation upon the state of her own mind, and continued it with interest for some time. In the evening some of the neighbours came in, and nothing appeared but that she was as well as usual. About eight o'clock she was seized with a violent pain in her stomach, and immediately threw up matter that was very black in its appearance. Medical aid was sent for, and soon arrived. Her distress seemed to increase rapidly. She was sensible of her situation. She took her husband by the hand, and said, "O this is death; I must die; God bless you, my dear husband; trust in him; be faithful; farewell." And to those around her, she turned, and said, "God bless you, farewell, my friends." In about half an hour after she was first taken, she clapped her hands to her head, and exclaimed, "O my head will burst," and went immediately into a fit, which continued two or three minutes. When she came out of it, her senses were quite gone, and her speech was almost gone; she spoke only once or twice afterwards. She remained in this situation, having fits at intervals, till two o'clock the next night, when she expired, Jan. 29, 1827, in the twenty-fourth year of her age. If the earnest desires of her husband, the affection of friends, and the skill of four experienced physicians, could have saved her useful and valuable life, she had still lived. But her time had come, and God called her away. It hence becomes her husband, her brothers and sisters, and all her friends, to say from the heart, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.*

ERRATA. Page 17, 13th line from the top, for 'grovelling,' read *quarrelling*; page 23, 8th line from the top, for 'coast,' read *boast*; page 24, 5th line from the bottom, for 'seem,' read *serve*.